

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Roland Martin

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## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Martin, Roland S.
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin,
<b>Dates:</b>	May 2, 2012
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2012
<b>Physical Description:</b>	8 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:45:03).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television commentator Roland Martin (1968 - ) served as an analyst on CNN and hosts the shows “Washington Watch with Roland Martin” and “Roland Martin: A Fresh Perspective for the 21st Century.” Martin was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on May 2, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2012_063
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist, Columnist, and Commentator Roland Sebastian Martin was born November 11, 1968 in Houston, Texas' Third Ward, the center of Houston's African American community. Roland's mother and father were his role-models growing up and his father was an avid newspaper reader and fan of television news. When Roland was 14, he found his passion for communications as he was part of the magnet program in communications at Jack Yates High School. In 1987, Roland attended Texas A&M University on academic scholarship, where he studied journalism and worked for the Bryan-College Station Eagle and for KBTX (Channel 3). As a junior in college Martin pledged Pi Omicron Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., and attended the National Association of Black Journalist convention.

In 1991 Roland graduated Texas A&M with a B.A. in Journalism and began working at the Austin American-Statesman. Roland eventually left Austin American-Statesman and became a city hall reporter for Fort Worth Star-Telegram. In 1995 he became a morning driver reporter with KRLD radio as sports reporter. During his time at KRLD he won top sports reporting award from the National Association of Black Journalists; and honors from the Houston Press Club. Roland became news editor and morning anchor of KKDA 730 AM radio, as well as editor at Dallas Weekly. In 2000, Roland was working as a freelance producer covering the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles and suffered a ruptured appendix; his medical bills led him to file bankruptcy.

In 2001, Roland became the first editor of blackamericaweb.com founded by Tom Joyner and married Rev. Jacquie Hood Martin. He returned to radio as a news correspondent for the American Urban Radio Network and as a sports commentator on Washington, D.C., radio station WOL's "Fifth Quarter Program." He also launched the ROMAR Media Group in Dallas, and became news editor for the new Savoy magazine. In 2007 Roland made his first appearance on CNN (later joins as contributor) and Fox television's conservative-oriented O'Reilly Factor and wrote a column that was picked up by the nationally distributed Creators Syndicate and ran in the Detroit News, Denver Post, and Indianapolis Star. In 2004 Roland was hired as a consultant by the Chicago Defender and served

as a radio talk show host for WVON-AM in Chicago. Roland has published three books and is named top 50 pundits by the Daily Telegraph in the United Kingdom. In 2008 he earned his masters degree in Christian Communications from Louisiana Baptist University. He is two time winner of the NAACP Image Award for Best Interview for “In Conversation: The Michelle Obama Interview,” and for “In Conversation: The Senator Barack Obama Interview”. Ebony Magazine has selected Roland as one of the 150 Most Influential African Americans in the United States three times in a row. Currently he works as host and managing editor of “Washington watch with Roland Martin”, and recently launched “Roland a Fresh Perspective for the 21st Century” on rolandmartin.com.

Roland Martin currently resided in Washington, D.C. with wife Rev. Jacquie Hood Martin.

Roland Martin was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on May s, 2012.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Roland Martin was conducted by Larry Crowe on May 2, 2012, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 8 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Television commentator Roland Martin (1968 - ) served as an analyst on CNN and hosts the shows “Washington Watch with Roland Martin” and “Roland Martin: A Fresh Perspective for the 21st Century.”

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## Restrictions

### Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

### Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Martin, Roland S.

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

## Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Martin, Roland S.--Interviews

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African American television personalities--Interviews.

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African American journalists--Interviews.

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Television Commentator

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, May 2, 2012. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The

HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_001, TRT: 1:29:54 ?

Roland Martin describes his family's background. His mother, Emelda Joyce Lemond Martin, was born in Houston, Texas on November 30, 1947. Her parents moved from Opelousas, Louisiana to Houston in the early 1940s, as part of the Great Creole Migration. Martin describes his maternal family's close-knit life in the Clinton Park neighborhood of Houston. His father, Reginald Lynn Martin, Sr., was also born in Houston on April 25, 1947. Both Martin's parents attended Jack Yates High School, and married and started their family soon after graduation. He discusses his grandfathers' jobs at the local factories in Houston, his father's interest in education, and his responsibilities towards his family. Martin also talks about his older brother, Reginald Lynn Martin, Jr., his parents' personalities, who he takes after, and being influenced by his father's avid interest in the news and his mother's computer and typewriter.

African American families.

African Americans--Migration--History--20th century.

African American parents--Texas--Houston.

Brothers and sisters--Texas--Houston.

African American neighborhoods--Texas--Houston.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_002, TRT: 2:29:39 ?

Roland Martin and his siblings were raised in the Clinton Park neighborhood of Houston, Texas, where his maternal family had moved after migrating from Opelousas, Louisiana. He describes his memories of growing up in Clinton Park, his close knit family, and his parents' activism and leadership in the community. Martin talks about his siblings, his likeness to his mother as a child, the schools that he and his siblings attended, his experience in school, and his father's involvement in his academics. He also discusses his father growing upon in the absence of his biological mother, and the focus on skin color in the Creole population of his grandparents' generation.

Childhood and youth--Texas--Houston.

African American parents--Texas--Houston.

African American neighborhoods--Texas--Houston.

African American leadership--Texas--Houston.

African Americans--Education--Texas--Houston.

Brothers and sisters--Texas--Houston.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_003, TRT: 3:29:59 ?

Roland Martin attended Clinton Park Elementary School and Pleasantville Elementary School, then, William Holland Middle School, and Jack Yates School of Communications for high school, in Houston, Texas. He talks about his teachers in school, and about challenging his teacher in high school. Martin was a voracious reader during his childhood, and a regular visitor to the public library. He talks about the importance of attending summer camps as a child, the wealth of knowledge that he gained from reading, Houston's sports teams, and

playing baseball. In 1983, Martin enrolled at Jack Yates School of Communications, where he decided to pursue the television program. He describes his experience in high school and in the television studio there.

African Americans--Education--Texas--Houston.

Childhood and youth--Activities--Texas--Houston.

Sports--Texas--Houston.

Television broadcasting--Study and teaching.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:04 ?

Roland Martin attended Jack Yates School of Communications in Houston, Texas, where he excelled in the television program. He talks about playing baseball in high school, and securing custom jackets for students in the television program. Martin discusses working at his maternal grandmother's catering business from an early age, and taking a leadership role in the Texas state Junior Knights of St. Peter Claver. In 1987, Martin enrolled at Texas A&M University on an academic scholarship to study communications. He describes his decision to attend Texas A&M, the communications program there, and his decision to not pursue sports journalism. He also talks about black role models in the media during his childhood, and his grandmother's business, Lemond's Catering.

African Americans--Education, Secondary--Texas--Houston.

Baseball--Texas--Houston.

Texas A & M University.

African American leadership.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_005, TRT: 5:29:39 ?

Roland Martin attended Texas A&M University, where he studied communications, from 1987 to 1991. While there, he worked at local radio, print and television outlets. Martin talks about his experience with racial discrimination as an intern at the local television station. Martin also describes his experience at Texas A&M, and working in the video department. In 1989, he was able to attend the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Convention in New York, owing to funds that he received from the Strake Foundation. Martin describes the significance of the conference on his career as a journalist, becoming the student representative of the NABJ Board of Directors, remaining active in the NABJ, and meeting HistoryMaker Vernon Jarrett. Upon graduating from college in 1991, Martin was offered his first job at the 'Austin American-Statesman'. In 1993, he moved to the 'Fort Worth Star-Telegram', where he remained until 1995. Martin also talks about getting married to his first wife, Debra Duncan, in 1993.

Discrimination in the workplace.

Texas A & M University.

National Association of Black Journalists.

Jarrett, Vernon, 1921-2004.

Fort Worth star-telegram.

Marriage.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_006, TRT: 6:28:35 ?

Roland Martin became the news editor at KKDA Radio in Dallas, Texas, in 1995, where he covered the "Million Man March," the O.J. Simpson case, and broke news of Michael Irvin's arrest. He then moved to KRLD Radio and also became the managing editor of the 'Dallas Weekly'. Martin describes his return

to Houston, Texas, in 1999, to focus on his marriage and eventual divorce. He also talks about meeting his second wife, Reverend Jacquie Hood, his faith and spirituality, spending eighteen months as a freelance journalist with little financial stability, and his diagnosis with appendicitis at the Democratic National Convention in 2000. In 2001, Martin became the first editor of Tom Joyner's BlackAmericaWeb.com. In 2004, he moved to Chicago, Illinois, as an editorial consultant, before becoming the executive editor of the 'Chicago Defender'.

Radio stations--Texas--Dallas.

African American editors.

African Americans--Religion--Texas.

Marriage.

Chicago defender.

Appendicitis.

Joyner, Tom, 1949-

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_007, TRT: 7:28:47 ?

Roland Martin was hired as an editorial consultant in 2004, and soon after, as the executive editor of the 'Chicago Defender'. He describes the poor organizational and financial state of affairs at the 'Defender', his efforts to improve the newspaper, and his decision to leave the paper in 2006. In February of 2007, Martin signed on as a CNN contributor. He also hosted a show at WVON Radio in Chicago, and appeared on a segment of the Tom Joyner Morning Radio Show. Martin discusses his growing visibility on CNN, meeting Senator Barack Obama for the first time, and Obama's rapid ascent from state senator to president in four years. He also talks about his syndicated column, his growing career since 2008, his busy schedule, and his marriage to Reverend Jacquie Hood Martin.

Chicago defender.

Cable News Network.

Tom Joyner morning show.

Obama, Barack.

Marriage.

Video Oral History Interview with Roland Martin, Section A2012\_063\_001\_008, TRT: 8:19:26 ?

Roland Martin describes the perspective that he lends to the media, being forthright with his opinions, and his hopes and concerns for the African American community. He also describes the merits of various news platforms. Martin analyzes the critique of President Barack Obama from different perspectives, and ends his interview by reflecting upon his goals, career, and legacy.

Obama, Barack.

Journalism.